



Pennsylvania Municipal League
President – Derek Slaughter, Mayor, City of Williamsport



Pennsylvania State Association of Township Commissioners
President – Dennis R. Arthur, Commissioner, Tincum Township

MEMO

To: The Honorable Robert Freeman, Chair
The Honorable Brett Miller, Chair

From: Amy Sturges, Deputy Executive Director for Advocacy, The League and PSATC

Re: Opposition to Zoning Preemption Bill, House Bill 1459

Date: May 14, 2025

On behalf of the members of the Pennsylvania Municipal League and the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Commissioners, I am writing to express our ***strong opposition*** to House Bill 1459, which was referred to the Local Government Committee.

We greatly appreciate efforts to address the affordable and attainable housing crisis in the Commonwealth. Our members agree that we must take action to address this issue, however, we do not believe preempting local zoning authority is the solution. House Bill 1459 would preempt local zoning authority by allowing multi-dwelling units or mixed-use development by right in commercial districts. These are all actions that can be taken now at the local level.

Both the League and PSATC oppose preemption of local zoning authority. Local zoning is a long-held and time-tested power of local governments used to not only protect the health, safety, and welfare of citizens, but also to shape the character of a community. Locally elected officials are uniquely positioned to make the decisions that best serve their community. We are also concerned that this one size fits all approach will not serve all communities equally. Simply changing zoning laws still won't address the high costs and barriers to development, it won't decrease the number of blighted and vacant housing in our communities, and it won't deal with the lack of funding and programs for new homeowners. We must ensure zoning remains a local decision so the unique needs of specific communities can continue to be met.

For the reasons stated above, we request that House Bill 1459 not be scheduled for Committee consideration.